

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### HOW WOULD YOU ALLAY IRRITATION OF THE SKIN CAUSED BY IODINE, MUSTARD PLASTER, AND SOAP AND WATER ENEMA?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Amy Phipps, Hôpital Militaire, Arc-en-Barrois, France.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

The appearance of a skin eruption as the result of continued use of a certain drug may result from an adulterated preparation of the remedial agent, or, as is probably more commonly the case, the patient's idiosyncrasy respecting the particular drug.

1. *Iodine Rash*.—This may result from the liberation of free iodine from one of the iodide mixtures used internally. Or, again, it may result from the free application of iodine to an open wound, or when used as a vaginal douche. There are usually general as well as local symptoms, the former including headache, impaired vision, watering of eyes, discharging nose, and sore gums; there may be digestive disturbances and nervous depression also. The rash usually consists of raised pustules, the skin being markedly red between; they usually are sore and painful rather than marked by irritation. When arising in connection with a wound they usually appear round the immediate area of the same. These symptoms would, of course, be brought to the doctor's notice; who would probably withdraw the treatment and prescribe a remedial agent for the rash. For this, drugs such as arsenic, &c., are sometimes used, aperients are freely given, and some local application made. For the latter, the pustules are sometimes pricked with a sterile needle, and the part bathed and fomented; a simple ointment is sometimes useful, a dusting powder or wet compress frequently renewed. For the latter, sodium chloride in solution has in some cases had highly successful results, both in allaying any irritation and effecting a cure; but, of course, every case needs to be treated individually. General symptoms would be treated as they arise, but, once the drug is stopped, the symptoms rarely persist.

2. *Mustard-plaster Rash*.—If the plaster is watched, it will be removed before any urgent signs of irritation have appeared. However, on sensitive skins in a very short time a red rash or even blisters will appear. The latter will be pricked, and the whole covered with a piece of lint, spread with vaseline, boric ointment, or olive oil. The condition usually responds to treatment very rapidly; in a few cases a septic condition results, but this can

always be avoided if due care is taken. Probably some other form of counter-irritant will be prescribed where such is necessary.

3. *Enema Rash*.—This sometimes occurs as a result of rapidly repeated enemata, or even more commonly some alkaline soaps. It is usually visible round about the anus, though it sometimes affects the whole body surface, and is in small red and slightly raised spots. For this reason, and for the fact that the bowel is apt to become distended, rendering peristalsis sluggish, repeated enemata should only be given under medical direction; also care should be taken that the bulk of the enema is not retained to any extent; a drachm or two of turpentine added to the emulsion usually prevents this. The condition may be prevented, or certainly rendered less potent, by the use of a good Castile or sterile soft soap, and the addition of a little olive oil and salt to the enema. Locally, the affected areas may be swabbed with lotio calamine, and powdered with boracic or zinc and starch powder, or zinc or boric ointment may be applied. Where the treatment by enemata cannot be stopped, plain water, containing glycerine, or warm glycerine, olive oil, or castor oil may be used as a substitute for soap. The utmost cleanliness should be always observed in administration.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Mrs. M. Farthing and Miss A. Harding.

Mrs. Farthing writes:—Should there be pain and irritation in the rectum and around the anus after treatment by enema, I have been directed by the doctor to use barley water as an injection, which I have found soothing.

Miss Harding remarks:—Curd soap should be used for enemata where irritation may be expected, as soaps containing an excess of soda may cause a rash.

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Tell what you know of any new hospital treatment.

THE FIGHTING OF TYPHUS FEVER IN SERBIA.—Among the many victories which medicine has gained during the present war not the least is the clearing of Serbia from typhus fever, says the *Lancet*. An Exchange telegram published by the New York United Press briefly recounts an interview with Dr. Richard P. Strong, professor of tropical diseases, Harvard University, and head of the American Mission, in which he states that the number of deaths have been about 100,000.

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